

## **Lectio Divina**

Lectio Divina is an ancient spiritual practice from the Christian monastic tradition. In Lectio Divina, we seek to experience the presence of God through reading and listening, prayer, meditation and contemplation. Lectio Divina can be done as an individual or as a group.

### Practicing Lectio Divina individually

Begin by choosing a section of scripture that you would like to read and pray. You can choose the text randomly or use a liturgical book like the Book of Common Prayer. Try not to set a goal for how much content you will cover. The goal is to listen for God and experience his presence.

### Preparation

Next, do what you must to quiet and prepare yourself to hear from God. If you need to find a quiet room, or sit in silence for several minutes, or sit in a comfortable chair, take whatever posture will help you prepare to receive and experience God's presence.

### Reading/Listening

When you sense that your heart is prepared, begin by slowly reading the passage of scripture that you have selected. Don't move quickly through any sentence or phrase. As you read, pay attention to what word or phrase or idea catches your attention.

### Meditation

Next, begin to meditate on the word, phrase, or idea that captured your attention. Repeat it again and again. What thoughts come to mind as you meditate on this word, phrase or idea? What are you reminded of in your life? What does it make you hope for? Meditation is no easy task. As you try to concentrate, don't be disappointed if random thoughts enter your head. As they do, offer them to God.

### Prayer

Now begin to speak to God. Tell God what word, phrase or idea captured your attention and what came to mind as you meditated upon it. How is God using this word, phrase or idea to bless and transform you? Tell God what you have been thinking and feeling as you've listened and meditated. Tell God how you hope this word, phrase or idea will change your heart to be more like his.

### Contemplation

Finish by focusing your attention on the fact that God's presence is with you. If as you try to focus on God's presence you sense a need to read the text again, or continue meditating, or to simply continue talking with God, allow yourself to do so. As you do, know that you are in the presence of God.

### Practicing Lectio Divina as a group

Begin by identifying an individual to lead the process. This person will lead the process by reading the selected text three times. Each reading is followed by a period of silence after which each person is given the opportunity to briefly share what they are hearing as they listen to God.

#### First Reading

During the first reading, read the text aloud twice. Read through slowly. The purpose of the first reading is for each person to hear the text and to listen for a word, phrase or idea that captures their attention. As group members recognize a word, phrase or idea, they are to focus their attention on that word, repeating it.

#### Second Reading

During the second reading, read the text again. This time, listeners are to focus their attention on how the word, phrase or idea speaks to their life that day. What does it mean for you today? How is Christ, the Word, speaking to you about your life through this word, phrase or idea? What is Christ, the Word, speaking to you about your life through this word, phrase, or idea? After the reading, allow a brief period of silence and then invite group members to share briefly what they have heard.

#### Third Reading

Read the text again. This time, listeners are to focus on what God is calling them to do or to become. Experiencing God's presence changes us. It calls us to something. During this final reading, what is God calling you to do or to be as a result of this experience? After the third reading, allow a period of silence, and then invite group members to share what they are being called to do or to be.

Finish the exercise by having each one pray for the person on his or her right.